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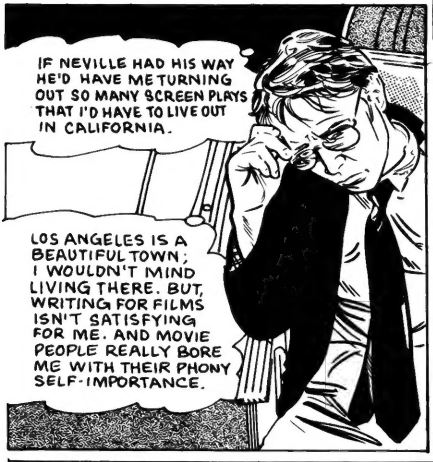
'H'LO, JOE. HOW GOES THE BATTLE?'

AUGUST 30, 1939

THE PASSENGER PLANE WAS HALF AN HOUR AWAY FROM LANDING IN NEW YORK. I WAS ON THE LAST LEG OF A 20 HOUR COAST-TO-COAST JOURNEY FROM LOS ANGELES, WHERE I'D BEEN WORKING THE LAST TWO WEEKS.

I WAS RETURNING FROM MY THIRD TRIP TO TO HOLLYWOOD. AFTER MY SECOND TRIP I HAD VOWED NOT TO RETURN THERE - AT LEAST, NOT VERY SOON. BUT THE STUDIOS WERE DESPERATE FOR EXPERIENCED WRITERS, AND I FOUND THAT I COULD NOT TURN DOWN THE WORK. NOT WITH A BABY ON THE WAY.


IF NEVILLE HAD HIS WAY HE'D HAVE ME TURNING OUT SO MANY SCREEN PLAYS THAT I'D HAVE TO LIVE OUT IN CALIFORNIA.
LOS ANGELES IS A BEAUTIFUL TOWN; I WOULDN'T MIND LIVING THERE. BUT, WRITING FOR FILMS ISN'T SATISFYING FOR ME. AND MOVIE PEOPLE REALLY BORE ME WITH THEIR PHONY SELF-IMPORTANCE.

IT'S GOOD MONEY, THOUGH. DAMN GOOD! AND I'VE GOT A WIFE TO SUPPORT, NOW... NO, THAT'S WHAT THEY ALL SAY. I WON'T LET MYSELF GET PULLED INTO THAT MORASS. I KNOW WHAT MY PLANS ARE AND I'M STICKING TO THEM.

NANCY AND I HAD JUST CELEBRATED OUR THIRD WEDDING ANNIVERSARY. SHE DIDN'T WANT ME TO WORK IN HOLLYWOOD. MY FIRST TRIP OUT THERE HAD BEEN A DISASTER AND SHE FEARED THAT I'D BECOME A NERVOUS WRECK. LATER, WHEN WE FOUND OUT SHE WAS PREGNANT, SHE ENCOURAGED ME TO GO BACK.

NANCY WAS DUE TO GIVE BIRTH AT ANY TIME NOW. SHE WANTED A BOY. I WANTED A GIRL. WITH ANY LUCK WE'D HAVE FRATERNAL TWINS... TWINS? WHAT WAS I THINKING? I MUST BE CRAZY.

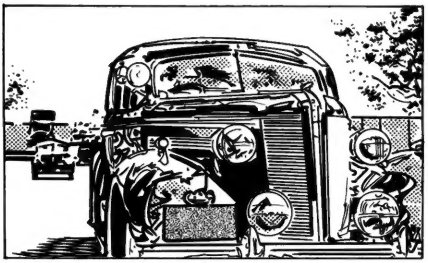
ALSO, WITH LUCK, I'D BE GIVING BIRTH TO MY BIG WAR NOVEL — 'THE DIRT OF HEAVEN.' IT WAS ABOUT LIFE IN THE TRENCHES DURING THE LAST WAR IN FRANCE.

THE MANUSCRIPT WAS MAKING THE ROUNDS OF THE NEW YORK PUBLISHING HOUSES. NEVILLE HARCOURT, MY AGENT, WAS CHAPERONEING IT.

Story: Dave Darrigo
Art: R.G. Taylor
Lettering: Les Taylor

IN THE TERMINAL I WENT TO PICK UP MY LUGGAGE.
GAWD, I'M SO TIRED I CAN BARELY LIFT THIS SUITCASE.
OH, THERE SHE IS.
HI, HONEY.
IT WAS ALWAYS GOOD TO SEE NANCY AGAIN - BUT THIS TIME WAS DIFFERENT. SHE WAS IMBUED WITH THE GLOW OF MOTHERHOOD.
ON MY TWO PREVIOUS TRIPS THERE HAD BEEN A ROMANTIC, OR METAPHYSICAL, BOND BETWEEN US WHICH HAD KEPT US CLOSE ALTHOUGH WE WERE FAR APART.
NOW THERE WAS A REAL, PHYSICAL BOND BETWEEN US IN THE FORM OF OUR BABY.
HI, THERE, WORD-SMITH.
NANCY HAD TWO SISTERS, BOTH OLDER THAN SHE. I GREETED HER OLDEST SISTER, PAULA, WHO HAD COME WITH NANCY TO PICK ME UP.
HI, PAULA. THANKS FOR HELPING US OUT TO-DAY.
OH, YOU'RE WELCOME, CLAY. WE KNEW YOU'D BE IN NO CONDITION TO DRIVE AFTER SUCH A LONG TRIP.
I HIRED A BAGGAGE-HANDLER TO TAKE MY SUITCASES OUT TO OUR CAR.
ARE YOU SURE YOU CAN MAKE IT OUT TO THE CAR?
YEAH, I THINK SO... YAWN... BOY, I'VE NEVER FELT SO TIRED. MY LEGS ARE STIFF.
HERE, LEAN ON ME, TOO.
WELL, IT WAS A GOOD TRIP THIS TIME. I ENJOYED WORKING WITH THE OTHER WRITERS. THE PRODUCER TREATED US ROYALLY. AND I THINK THE DIRECTOR MIGHT ACTUALLY FOLLOW OUR SCRIPT, BELIEVE IT OR NOT... YAWN... I'LL BELIEVE IT WHEN I SEE IT UP ON THE SCREEN.

PAULA DROVE US OUT OF BENNETT FIELD IN MY CHEVROLET, WHICH I'D BOUGHT WITH MONEY EARNED FROM MY SECOND TRIP.
TRIP #1 HAD BEEN FOR A JUNGLE PICTURE CALLED 'JUNGLE DEATH DRUMS'. TRIP #2 WAS FOR A WESTERN CALLED 'MONTANA KILLER'. THIS LAST TRIP WAS FOR ANOTHER WESTERN - 'TRAIL TO TOMBSTONE.'



I'M GETTING SICK OF DOING WESTERNS. I TOLD NEVILLE THAT I WANT TO DO SOME MYSTERIES NOW - LIKE THE THIN MAN OR THE SAINT.

OH! I'D LOVE TO SEE YOU DO THAT, TOO

MMMM. I LOVE THOSE THIN MAN MOVIES.

HERE'S MY CHECK FOR TRAIL TO TOMBSTONE.

OH, DEAR! HA, HA, HA. I DON'T BELIEVE WHAT IT SAYS! ARE YOU SURE THEY DIDN'T MAKE A MISTAKE?

NOPE... IT TAKES ME TWO MONTHS TO EARN IN MAGAZINES WHAT THEY PAY ME THERE IN TWO WEEKS.

IT SOUNDS AS IF IT'S TRUE ABOUT THE STREETS OF HOLLYWOOD BEING BUILT WITH GOLD-BRICKS.

I WOULDN'T SAY THAT, PAULA. I MADE A LOT OF MONEY IN THOSE TWO WEEKS, BUT IT'S THE TOUGHEST TWO WEEKS THAT ANYONE WOULD WANT TO SPEND.

NANCY CAME CLOSER TO ME AND PUT MY HAND ON THE BABY.

FEEL IT KICKING. HA, HA, HA.

I'M GLAD YOU'RE BACK IN TIME FOR THE BIRTH. I'M SORRY WE HAD THAT FIGHT BEFORE YOU LEFT.

I'M SORRY, TOO.

THE NEXT DAY I WENT DOWN TO SEE JOE PERKINS – OR, AS I LIKED TO CALL HIM, 'JOE THE PUG'. JOE WAS AN EX-BOXER WITH CAULIFLOWER EARS AND A GRADE 3 EDUCATION. WE WERE WORLDS APART IN MANY WAYS, BUT HE WAS A GOOD FRIEND OF MINE. HE'D BLOODIED MANY NOSES IN HIS EARLY DAYS, BUT HE COULDN'T STEP ON AN ANT, NOW.
THAT GUY ISN'T JOE. IS JOE SICK?...OH, DAMN! I HOPE IT ISN'T AS BAD AS I THINK IT IS. IN ALL THE TIME I'VE BEEN GONE, JOE COULD HAVE DIED AND BEEN BURIED... GOD, I HOPE NOT! PLEASE, JUST LET HIM HAVE A COLD.

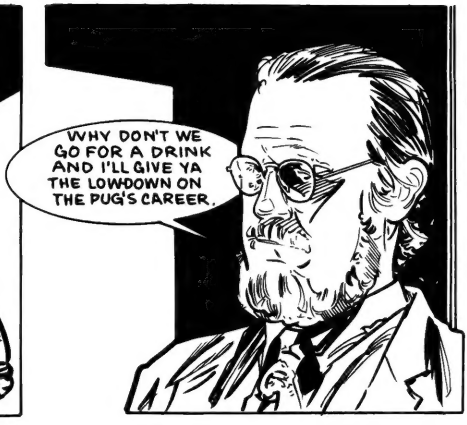
DURING CHRISTMAS OF '35 JOE'S WIFE TOOK SICK AND I RAN JOE'S NEWSSTAND FOR HIM. I ONLY OPERATED IT FOR A FEW DAYS, BUT I COULD STILL REMEMBER HOW EACH ONE OF HIS REGULAR CUSTOMERS HAD COME UP TO ME AND ASKED –
CIGARS
WHERE'S JOE?
WHO WANTS TO KNOW?
WHERE'D THEY GET THIS GUY? OUT OF SING-SING?
I'M A FRIEND OF HIS.
YEAH? SO AM I. SO, WHAT?
ARE YOU ALWAYS THIS CHEERFUL?

I KNEW WHERE JOE AND HIS WIFE, MARTHA, LIVED, SO I WALKED OVER TO SEE THEM.
WHO IS THAT JERK?
DOES HE THINK I LOOK LIKE A COP OR A BILL COLLECTOR?

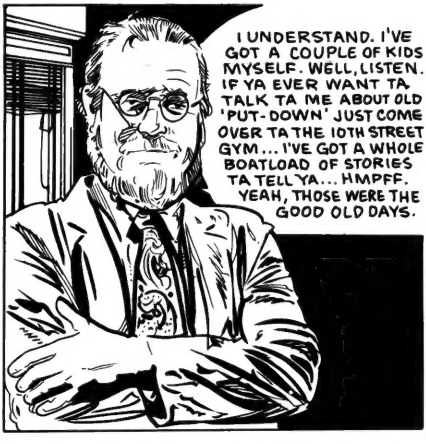
MARTHA GREETED ME AT THE DOOR.
OH, HELLO, CLAY, HOW ARE YOU?
I'M FINE. WHO'S THAT GUY DOWN AT THE NEWSSTAND?
OH, HE'S THE NEW OWNER. WE SOLD THE STAND TO HIM.
WHY? WHAT'S GOING ON?
JOE'S SICK, I'M AFRAID. IT'S HIS LUNGS. THE DOCTOR SAYS HE CAN'T WORK OUTSIDE ANYMORE.
CAN I SEE HIM?
JOE WAS SLEEPING, SO I HAD TO WAIT. SOON, THERE WAS A KNOCK AT THE DOOR.
KNOCK. KNOCK.
BEN! BEN KEELER!
HELLO, MARTHA. IT'S BEEN A LONG TIME.
I'M SORRY TO HEAR ABOUT OLD JOE. HOW'S HE DOIN'?
HE'S RESTING, THAT'S ALL HE CAN DO, NOW... BEN, THIS IS OUR FRIEND, CLAY.
HELLO, MR KEELER.
CALL ME BEN. SO, YOU'RE A PAL OF THE OLD PUG, HUH?... YOU LOOK LIKE A REPORTER. YOU WORK FOR A PAPER? IS THAT HOW YOU KNOW JOE?

NOPE. I'M A WRITER. I WRITE STORIES FOR MAGAZINES. I LIVE IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD, SO I SPEND A LOT OF TIME AT JOE'S STAND... WELL, I USED TO SPEND A LOT OF TIME THERE. I'M GETTING TOO BUSY THESE DAYS... HOW ABOUT YOU? DID YOU KNOW HIM WHEN HE WAS A FIGHTER?
YEAH! I KNEW HIM LIKE A BROTHER. I WAS HIS MANAGER. WE USED TO CALL HIM 'PUT-DOWN PERKINS'
WAS HE A GOOD BOXER?
WELL - HE PUT DOWN SOME OF THE TOP FIGHTERS OF HIS DAY. ONLY TROUBLE WAS THAT THEY PUT HIM DOWN, TOO.
THEY DID IT TA HIM MORE TIMES THAN HE DID IT TA THEM.
WAS HE EVER A CONTENDER?
SURE, HE WAS. SURE. BUT, YA GOTTA UNDERSTAND THE FIGHTERS GET TOUGHER AT THE TOP. YA GOTTA HAVE A REAL KILLER'S INSTINCT TO BE A CHAMP. JOE WAS TOUGH-BUT HE WASN'T NO KILLER.
WHILE I TALKED TO BEN, MARTHA HAD GONE INTO THE BEDROOM TO CHECK ON JOE. SHE CAME BACK OUT AND TOLD US WE COULD GO IN TO SEE HIM.
I CAN'T BELIEVE THIS! IT SEEMS LIKE ONLY YESTERDAY THAT MARTHA WAS ON HER DEATH-BED IN THE HOSPITAL. I THOUGHT THAT JOE WOULD END UP A LONELY WIDOWER... NOW, IT LOOKS AS IF MARTHA WILL OUTLIVE HIM.
H'LO, JOE. HOW GOES THE BATTLE?

JOE LOOKED TIRED - LIKE A TRAVELLER WHO HAD COME TO THE END OF A LONG ROAD. IT WAS THE KIND OF FACE THAT WE ALL PRESENT TO THE WORLD, SOONER OR LATER.
WHETHER WE ARE RICH OR POOR; POWERFUL OR POWERLESS - DEATH IS THE GREAT EQUALIZER. WE END OUR JOURNEY IN LIFE THE SAME WAY THAT WE BEGIN IT - STRIPPED OF OUR VANITIES AND OBSERVING THE WORLD WITH BOTH FASCINATION AND DISDAIN.
H'LO, CLAY... BEN, YOU OLD DOG...
YOU WERE A GOOD MANAGER, BEN... I WANTED TO BE A CHAMP FOR YOU. BUT, I GUESS YA GOTTA BE BORN WITH A KNOCK-OUT PUNCH... KNOW WHAT I MEAN?
YOU'LL ALWAYS BE A CHAMP TO ME, JOE. YOU ALWAYS PLAYED FAIR AND SQUARE. INSIDE THE RING - AND OUT OF IT.
HI, PAL. I HATE TO SEE YOU LIKE THIS.
I'LL MISS YOU, CLAY.
COME ON, JOE. DON'T TALK LIKE THAT.
I'LL MISS READIN' YOUR STORIES... I WAS YOUR BIGGEST FAN, CLAY... COUGH... KNOW WHAT I MEAN?
I SURE DO.
AS WE LEFT THE ROOM JOE CALLED TO ME -
THANKS, PAL.
KEEP PLUGGIN' AWAY ...COUGH...COUGH... YOU'LL BE A CHAMP ONE OF THESE DAYS.



THANKS, BEN. I'D REALLY LIKE TO DO THAT, BUT I HAVE TO GO HOME TO MY WIFE. SHE'S EXPECTING OUR FIRST CHILD ANY TIME NOW, AND I SHOULDN'T BE AWAY FROM HER.


I UNDERSTAND. I'VE GOT A COUPLE OF KIDS MYSELF. WELL, LISTEN. IF YA EVER WANT TA TALK TA ME ABOUT OLD 'PUT-DOWN' JUST COME OVER TA THE 10TH STREET GYM... I'VE GOT A WHOLE BOATLOAD OF STORIES TA TELL YA... HMPFF. YEAH, THOSE WERE THE GOOD OLD DAYS.

I WENT HOME AND GOT TO WORK.

I HAD TOLD NEVILLE HARCOURT I WANTED A FEW MONTHS LEAVE OF ABSENCE FROM FILM SCRIPTS TO ENABLE ME TO WORK ON MY FICTION.

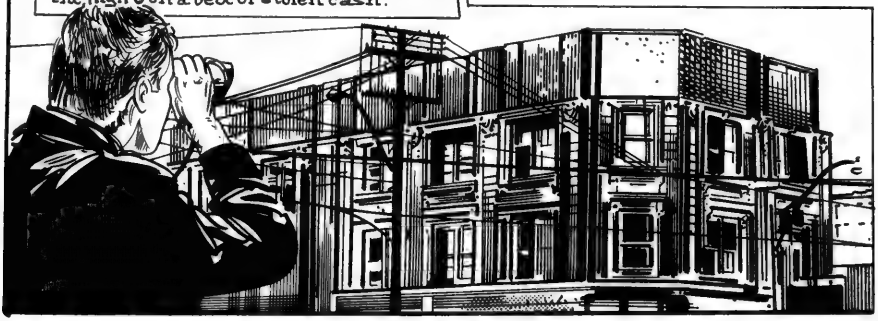
I HAD TWO CURRENT PROJECTS. ONE OF THEM WAS MY SECOND NOVEL. IT WAS AN AUTO-BIOGRAPHICAL STORY CALLED, 'THE WORDSMITH'

MY OTHER 'MEAT-ON-THE-TABLE' WORK WAS FOR A MONTHLY 'G-MAN' PULP. ALTHOUGH I LOVED MY STABLE OF HEROES, I WAS BORED WITH THEM, NOW. THEY DIDN'T EXCITE ME ANY MORE, AND SO, I HAD SHELVED THEM. I WAS LOOKING FOR A NEW CHALLENGE - BUT I WANTED A CHALLENGE WITH SOME FINANCIAL SECURITY.

THEN, NEVILLE DISCOVERED THAT THE EDITOR OF 'MANHUNTERS' MAGAZINE, FEATURING ACE G-MAN 'BART STOVER', WAS IN NEED OF A NEW STAFF WRITER. I GOT THE JOB, EASILY. I WAS WORKING ON MY TENTH STOVER NOVEL.

Stover took the field glasses from MacKenzie and raised them to his eyes.
"He's in that second floor window," MacKenzie told his boss.
"I see him," Stover said. "It looks like he woke up after sleeping through the night on a bed of stolen cash."

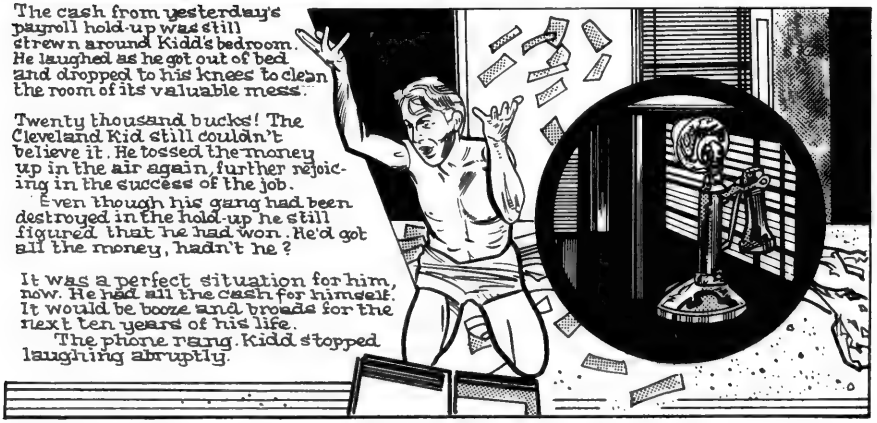
The dawn of another day slowly broke over the skyscraper horizon.
Stover supervised his F.B.I. squad and the local police as they blockaded the area in the half-darkness of the early morning.



The cash from yesterday's payroll hold-up was still strewn around Kidd's bedroom. He laughed as he got out of bed and dropped to his knees to clean the room of its valuable mess.

Twenty thousand bucks! The Cleveland Kid still couldn't believe it. He tossed the money up in the air again, further rejoicing in the success of the job.
Even though his gang had been destroyed in the hold-up he still figured that he had won. He'd got all the money, hadn't he?

It was a perfect situation for him, now. He had all the cash for himself. It would be booze and broads for the next ten years of his life.
The phone rang. Kidd stopped laughing abruptly.



Kidd let the phone ring. He didn't want to answer it. Maybe it was one of the gang. Could Barber Shop Boyle still be alive? Had Apache Sam escaped the dragnet?

"Hello, Kid," the lady's voice said. "You better lam out of there, right now. The bulls are surrounding your building."

It sounded like Ginger - the girl who worked in the tavern across the street.

Kidd threw the telephone away as a flash of panic hit him.

Where was his gun?

He couldn't find his gun. It was lost somewhere under all the loose cash.

Kidd started to put the money in the suitcase. But, he sadly realized that he would have to leave it behind if he was to escape cleanly.

Time to get this show on the road, Stover thought as he walked into the deserted street and raised the megaphone.

"F.B.I., Kidd! We've got a private limo here for you. Direct to the slammer."

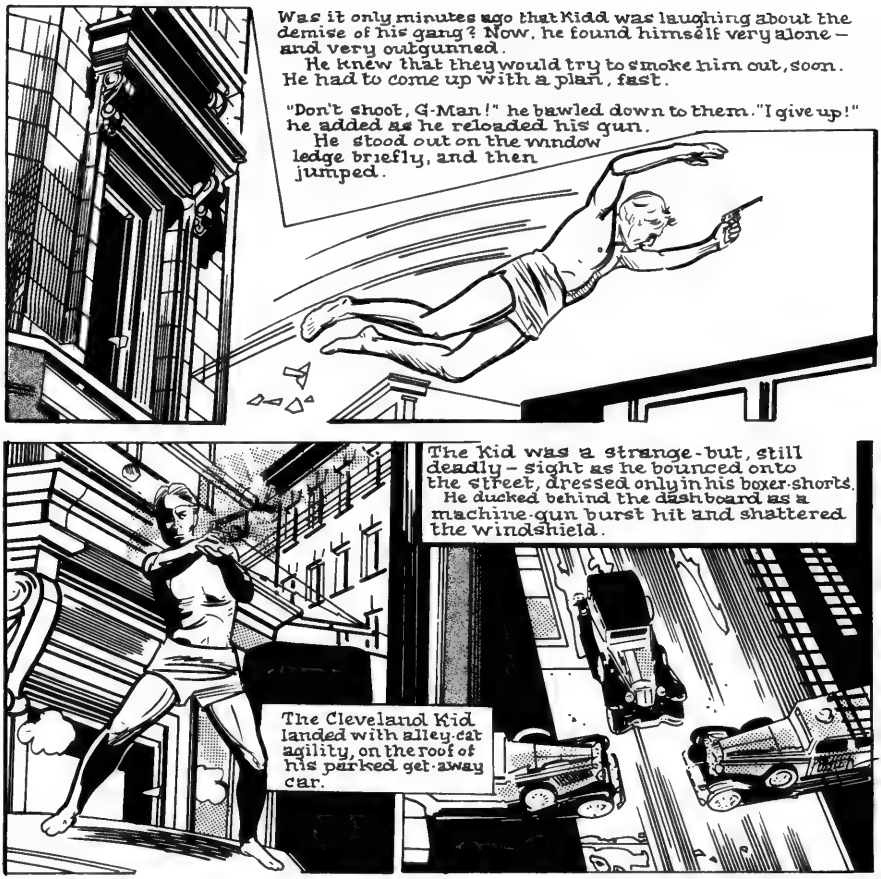
Kidd found his revolver. He went to the open window and peered down at the big Special Agent.

"Very funny, copper. You should write jokes for Jack Benny!"

Kidd blasted three shots down at the G-Man.

Stover brought out his rod and yelled, "Open fire!" to his men.

Machine-guns, rifles, shotguns and revolvers let forth a loud, leaden staccato that was music to the ears of Stover, the maestro from Mr. Hoover.


Was it only minutes ago that Kidd was laughing about the demise of his gang? Now, he found himself very alone — and very outgunned.
He knew that they would try to smoke him out, soon. He had to come up with a plan, fast.
"Don't shoot, G-Man!" he bawled down to them. "I give up!" he added as he reloaded his gun.
He stood out on the window ledge briefly, and then jumped.
The Kid was a strange-but, still deadly - sight as he bounced onto the street, dressed only in his boxer-shorts.
He ducked behind the dashboard as a machine-gun burst hit and shattered the windshield.
The Cleveland Kid landed with alley-cat agility, on the roof of his parked get-away car.
He kept low in his seat as he put the car in gear and pushed the accelerator pedal to the floor.
Stover had placed two police cars at the end of the street.
These two cars were the last obstacles to freedom for the Cleveland Kid. If he escaped from out of Stover's grasp he would be a legend. He would be Public Enemy #1.
Recklessly, he used his car like a big sledge-hammer and pounded his way through the blockade.
Both police cars were knocked on their sides from the force of the crash.

The Kid's daring acrobatics had stunned most of the policemen. But, one cop raced his car up beside Stover and shouted, "Get in! I'll catch him!"

"Good man!" Stover bellowed as he jumped into the pursuit car.

At this time of the morning there was little traffic to impede the two speeding autos.

Stover was impressed by young Ramsey's abilities behind the wheel.

"Get as close to him as you can!" the G-Man yelled over the sound of the siren.

Stover finished reloading his gun. Then he leaned out of the car's window to shoot at the tires of Kidd's machine.

The chase had taken the cars outside the city.

Stover had almost emptied his gun a second time at the Kid's car. The G-Man was down to his last bullet. Finally, one of the slugs hit a rear tire and burst it.

The Cleveland Kid lost control of the auto. It veered towards the edge of the cliff - and then it rocketed out into thin air.

The Kid would not accept Death as his final escape from the law. He jumped out of the doomed vehicle.

"He's a goner!" Ramsey said as he stepped on the brakes.
"I wouldn't bet on it," Stover said as he holstered his empty gun and stepped out of the police car.
The big Special Agent stood at the side of the cliff and looked down at the source of the thick, black smoke that was billowing into the sky.
"It looks like the Kid's time has run out," Stover said to Ramsey. "If he got out of this one then he's a regular Houdini."

KIDD RAN FROM THE SCENE OF THE CRASH BEFORE STOVER HAD FINISHED HIS CLIMB DOWN THE STEEP CLIFF TO INVESTIGATE THE AREA - END OF CHAPTER.

AND NOW, CHAPTER SEVEN OF 'THE KILLER WHO COULDN'T BE KILLED.' CHAPTER TITLE: 'KILLER WITH NINE LIVES.'
CLAY!
HUH? WHAT'S THE MATTER, NANCY?

HOW DO YOU FEEL, SWEETHEART?
THE CONTRACTIONS ARE VERY STRONG NOW. THEY'RE COMING ABOUT AN HOUR APART.

I'LL HAVE TO GO TO THE HOSPITAL SOON... I'M SO GLAD THAT YOU GOT BACK HOME IN TIME TO BE HERE... I'M NOT AS STRONG AS YOU THINK I AM.
LOOK, HONEY. IF I WERE GOING THROUGH WHAT YOU'RE GOING THROUGH, I'M NOT SURE I'D BE HALF AS STRONG AS YOU'VE BEEN.

DON'T WORRY. I'LL BE RIGHT HERE BY YOUR SIDE UNTIL —
RIIING RIIING
I'LL GET IT... DON'T GO AWAY.

HELLO, CLAY. IT'S NEVILLE... I'VE GOT GREAT NEWS FOR YOU.
I HOPE IT'S ABOUT THE DIRT OF HEAVEN. I THINK I'M DUE FOR SOME NEWS ABOUT IT.

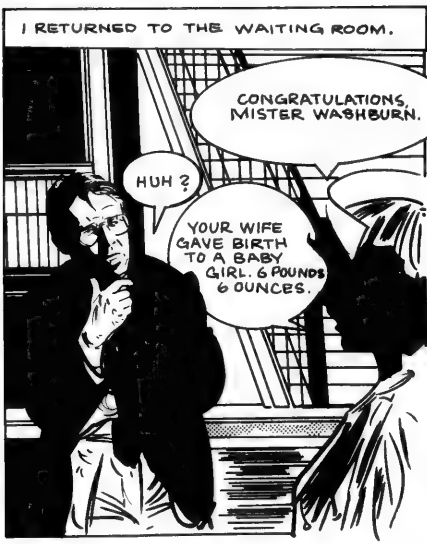
I'M CALLING ABOUT TWO THINGS. FIRSTLY, THE NOVEL. YES, IT'S BEEN ACCEPTED BY A PUBLISHER, RANDOM HOUSE. THEY'VE OFFERED $1,200 FOR THE U.S. RIGHTS. BUT I'M GOING TO PUSH FOR MORE.
OKAY. $1,200 IS FINE. BUT - YEAH, I'D LIKE MORE, IF YOU CAN GET IT. DON'T PUSH THEM TOO HARD. I DON'T WANT TO JEOPARDIZE LOSING THEIR INTEREST IN IT. I KNOW IT'S ONLY A FIRST NOVEL, SO I CAN'T EXPECT THE WORLD. I'LL SETTLE FOR $1,200 IF IT MEANS THEY WILL SPEND MORE TO PROMOTE IT.
QUITE RIGHT. WITH PROPER PROMOTION WE HAVE A BETTER CHANCE TO SELL A SCREENPLAY BASED ON THE BOOK.
NOW, SECONDLY - I HAVE TO ASK YOU IF YOU WOULD CONSIDER UNDERTAKING A NEW FILM PROJECT AT THIS TIME. I'M SURE THAT YOU'LL FIND IT EXCITING.
I CAN'T REALLY CONSIDER -, WELL, I'M CURIOUS. TELL ME WHAT IT IS.
YOU'RE FAMILIAR WITH THAT WARNER BROTHERS ACTOR, NAMED ERROL FLYNN, AREN'T YOU? HE WAS JUST IN THAT BIG WESTERN CALLED DODGE CITY.
YEAH. I SAW IT. AND HE WAS IN CAPTAIN BLOOD AND ROBIN HOOD.
YES, WELL, I'VE BEEN TALKING TO A COUPLE PRODUCERS AT WARNER BROTHERS AND THEY WANT SOMEONE TO SEARCH DIME MAGAZINES FOR GOOD STORY PROPERTIES, AND TO DEVELOP THEM FOR ERROL FLYNN. YOU'RE ON TOP OF THEIR LIST. THEY WANT YOU TO FLY OUT AND MEET THEM... SORRY, CLAY, I'VE GOT TO RUN. I'LL RING YOU BACK SOON. 'BYE FOR NOW.
WHO WAS THAT CALLING?
NEVILLE... HE SAYS HE'S GOT A NEW JOB FOR ME IN HOLLYWOOD. IT SOUNDS LIKE IT'S WORK THAT'S RIGHT UP MY ALLEY.
OH, CLAY. I WISH YOU WOULD GET HOLLYWOOD OUT OF YOUR BONES. I TOLD YOU THAT I DON'T WANT TO MOVE OUT THERE. AND I DON'T WANT US TO BE SEPARATED FOR LONG PERIODS, ESPECIALLY NOW, WHEN WE'RE STARTING A FAMILY.
WE COULD USE THE MONEY, NANCY. FOR THE BABY. AND FOR A HOUSE. YOU KNOW THAT.
I KNOW. BUT, WE'LL MANAGE. THERE'S NO HURRY.

FIRST, SHE SAYS THAT WE HAVE TO START SAVING MONEY TO BUY A HOUSE. NOW, SHE SAYS "WE'LL MANAGE."
I DON'T CARE WHAT SHE SAYS. I'M GOING TO TAKE THAT JOB AS SOON AS THE BABY IS BORN... IT'S FOR HER OWN GOOD.
HOW DOES SHE THINK WE'LL BE ABLE TO AFFORD A HOUSE WHEN I ONLY GET $1,200 ADVANCES ON BOOKS THAT TAKE ME SEVERAL YEARS TO WRITE?... NUTS! I FORGOT TO TELL HER THE NEWS ABOUT THE BOOK... AW, MAYBE ITS BETTER THAT I DIDN'T TELL HER. SHE WOULD HAVE USED IT AGAINST ME, TO KEEP ME FROM DOING MOVIE WORK.
I WORKED LATE. NANCY HAD ALREADY GONE TO BED. I WAS TOO TIRED TO UNDRESS, SO I CURLED UP ON THE COUCH. IT TURNED OUT TO BE A FORTUITOUS MOVE.
CLAY... WAKE UP. IT'S TIME TO GO TO THE HOSPITAL.
HUH? OH. OH, YEAH... WHERE ARE MY GLASSES?
CAREFUL. DON'T FALL OFF THE COUCH.
I GOT OFF THE COUCH WITHOUT TROUBLE, BUT I STILL MANAGED TO STUB MY TOE ON A CHAIR-LEG. AND, AS WE DROVE TO THE HOSPITAL, I YAWNED MY WAY THROUGH A RED LIGHT.
I WAS PUT INTO THE WAITING ROOM. UP UNTIL NOW I HADN'T THOUGHT ABOUT THE ACTUAL BIRTH; MY THOUGHTS WERE FOCUSED ON THE BABY. BUT, AS I WAITED, I REALIZED THAT THE BIRTH ITSELF WAS A BIG HURDLE TO JUMP. THERE MAY BE COMPLICATIONS. NANCY'S LIFE MIGHT BE IN PERIL. NOW, I REALLY STARTED TO WORRY.

WHAT WILL I DO IF SHE DIES IN LABOR? HOW COULD I GO ON? ... GEEZ, WILL YOU SIT DOWN AND TURN YOUR BRAIN OFF!!
I'M THE ONLY GUY HERE WHO ISN'T SMOKING, AND THESE OTHER NERVOUS WILLIES ARE PUFFING UP A STORM. I FEEL AS IF I'M SITTING IN A GIANT ASHTRAY!
HOW LONG HAVE I BEEN HERE? ONLY AN HOUR? FEELS LONGER THAN THAT.
I'VE GOT TO GO OUTSIDE AND GET SOME FRESH AIR. I CAN'T BREATH IN HERE.
I TOLD THE NURSE THAT I WAS GOING FOR A SHORT WALK. I DIDN'T HAVE TO GO VERY FAR BEFORE I HEARD SOMETHING THAT STOPPED ME IN MY TRACKS
LATE EDITION! READ IT HERE! WAR IN EUROPE! GERMANY INVADES POLAND!
PAPER, MISTER? WAR IN EUROPE. READ IT HERE.
I'LL TAKE ONE.
WAR
HITLER SAYS POLAND SHELLED THEM FIRST. WHAT A GODDAMNED LIAR! I'M NOT BUYING THAT.
'REPORTS INDICATE THAT RESISTANCE IS STRONG'. MAYBE— BUT, IF THEY'RE STILL RESISTING THEY WON'T LAST FOR MORE THAN A WEEK OR TWO. IT'S LIKE A WELTERWEIGHT GOING INTO THE SAME RING AGAINST A HEAVYWEIGHT.

THAT BASTARD HITLER WAS USING POLAND AS A WAY OF SLAPPING ENGLAND AND FRANCE IN THEIR STODGY, LEAGUE OF NATIONS FACES, AND CHALLENGING THEM TO A DUEL.
"YOU TWO WON THE FIRST BOUT," HITLER WAS SAYING TO THEM. "BUT, IT'S 21 YEARS LATER, AND NOW IT'S TIME FOR A RE-MATCH!"
POOR NANCY. THERE SHE IS UP IN ONE OF THOSE ROOMS; GIVING BIRTH, WHILE THE WORLD CRUMBLES AROUND HER.
AND THE WINNER GETS TO HAVE THE TITLE TO EUROPE AND THE HIGH SEAS. GO INTO YOUR CORNERS, GENTLEMEN, AND COME OUT FIGHTING. HOW LONG WOULD IT TAKE BEFORE AMERICA ENTERED THE FRAY.

WHAT'S THAT OVER THERE? OH. HOBOS.
THOSE GUYS WILL HAVE JOBS, SOON. THAT'S ONE BENEFIT OF HAVING WARS, I SUPPOSE... WHAT A CRAZY WORLD.


I RETURNED TO THE WAITING ROOM.
CONGRATULATIONS, MISTER WASHBURN.
HUH?
YOUR WIFE GAVE BIRTH TO A BABY GIRL. 6 POUNDS 6 OUNCES.

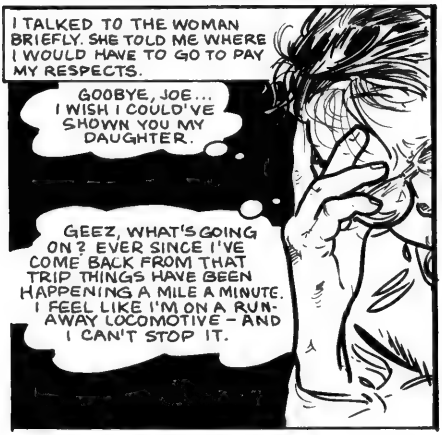
BOTH ARE DOING FINE. YOU CAN VISIT THEM SHORTLY.
HA! IT'S HAPPENED! AFTER ALL THESE MONTHS - I'M FINALLY A FATHER!

GOD, I'M GLAD. I'M GLAD IT WAS A GIRL... GIRLS DON'T END UP WITH RIFLES IN THEIR HANDS, GOING OFF TO WAR... GIRLS DON'T END UP AS HOBOS IN THE STREETS.

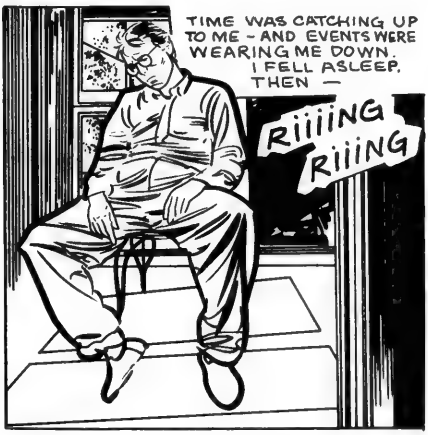
I RETURNED HOME, LEAVING NANCY AND OUR DAUGHTER, GAIL, IN THE GOOD CARE OF THE NURSES.

I HAD MANY PHONE CALLS TO MAKE. ONE OF THEM WAS TO JOE. A WOMAN ANSWERED THE PHONE – BUT IT WASN'T MARTHA.

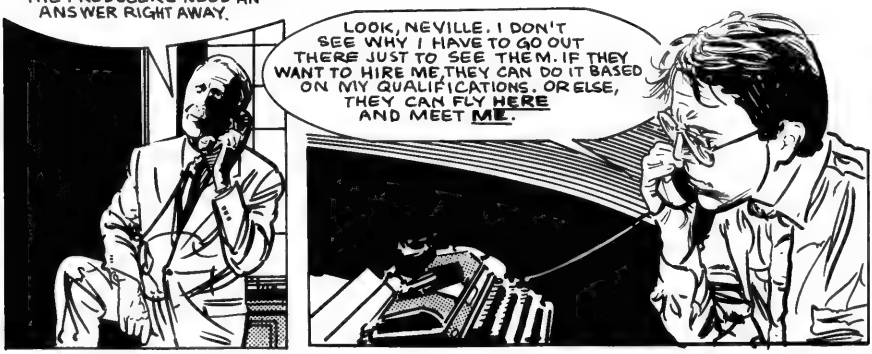
I TALKED TO THE WOMAN BRIEFLY. SHE TOLD ME WHERE I WOULD HAVE TO GO TO PAY MY RESPECTS.


GOODBYE, JOE... I WISH I COULD'VE SHOWN YOU MY DAUGHTER.
GEEZ, WHAT'S GOING ON? EVER SINCE I'VE COME BACK FROM THAT TRIP THINGS HAVE BEEN HAPPENING A MILE A MINUTE. I FEEL LIKE I'M ON A RUN-AWAY LOCOMOTIVE – AND I CAN'T STOP IT.

TIME WAS CATCHING UP TO ME – AND EVENTS WERE WEARING ME DOWN. I FELL ASLEEP. THEN —

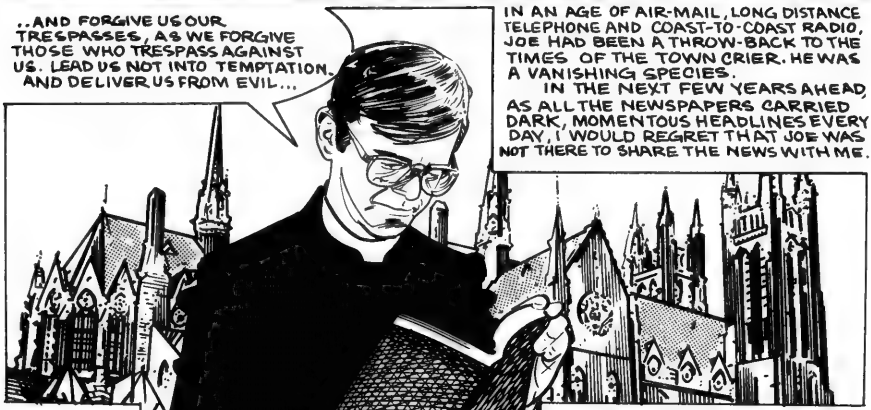


HELLO, CLAY. HAVE YOU THOUGHT ABOUT THAT JOB OFFER I MENTIONED TO YOU? THE PRODUCERS NEED AN ANSWER RIGHT AWAY.

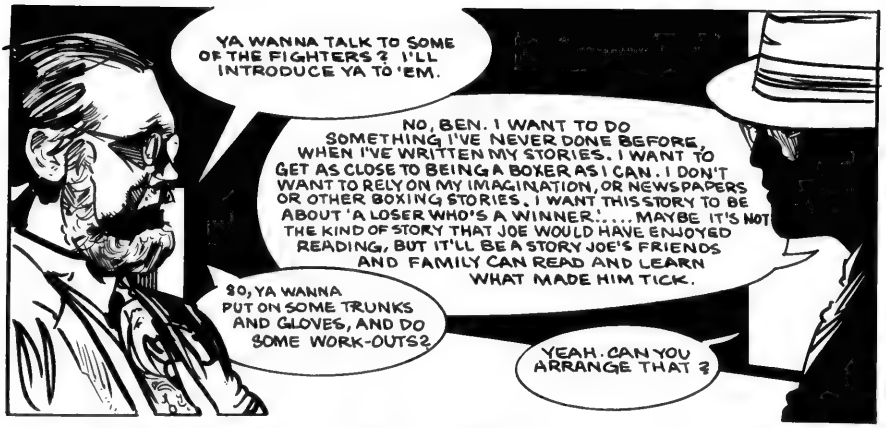

LOOK, NEVILLE. I DON'T SEE WHY I HAVE TO GO OUT THERE JUST TO SEE THEM. IF THEY WANT TO HIRE ME, THEY CAN DO IT BASED ON MY QUALIFICATIONS. OR ELSE, THEY CAN FLY HERE AND MEET ME.

YOU'RE BEING UNREASONABLE, CLAY. THEY WANT TO TALK TO YOU IN ORDER TO GIVE YOU DIRECTION AND BACKGROUND INFORMATION.
THERE'S AIR MAIL DELIVERY, ISN'T THERE? TELL THEM TO SEND IT TO ME BY POST.
WHAT'S THE MATTER, CLAY?
I'M NOT A WRITING MACHINE, NEVILLE! I'M ONLY HUMAN. KNOW WHAT I MEAN?
DID YOU STOP TO THINK THAT I MIGHT HAVE A LIFE OF MY OWN TO LIVE? I'M INFLUENCED BY THE PEOPLE AND EVENTS AROUND ME... LAST NIGHT MY WIFE GAVE BIRTH - AND I JUST FOUND OUT THAT A FRIEND OF MINE HAS DIED... LISTEN, I'VE GOT TO SPEND TIME HERE. OKAY? HOLLYWOOD CAN GO TO HELL!

AT THE FUNERAL I WAS GRATIFIED TO SEE SO MANY OF JOE'S NEWSTAND CUSTOMERS SHOW UP. THE OLD PUG HAD BEEN A VALUABLE PART OF THEIR LIVES, AS HE HAD BEEN IN MINE. WHETHER IT WAS RAIN OR SHINE; DURING HEATWAVE OR COLD SPELL; WHETHER WE READ HORRIBLE HEADLINES OR SUNDAY FUNNIES - JOE LIVED THROUGH IT ALL WITH US.


..AND FORGIVE US OUR TRESPASSES, AS WE FORGIVE THOSE WHO TRESPASS AGAINST US. LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION. AND DELIVER US FROM EVIL...
IN AN AGE OF AIR-MAIL, LONG DISTANCE TELEPHONE AND COAST-TO-COAST RADIO, JOE HAD BEEN A THROW-BACK TO THE TIMES OF THE TOWN CRIER. HE WAS A VANISHING SPECIES.
IN THE NEXT FEW YEARS AHEAD, AS ALL THE NEWSPAPERS CARRIED DARK, MOMENTOUS HEADLINES EVERY DAY, I WOULD REGRET THAT JOE WAS NOT THERE TO SHARE THE NEWS WITH ME.

I JOINED BEN KEELER AND WE LEFT THE CEMETERY TOGETHER.
YOU SURE YA WON'T JOIN ME FOR A DRAFT OR TWO, CLAY. THERE'S A TAVERN OVER THAT WAY, JUST A BLOCK FROM HERE.
NO, THANKS... CAN I ASK YOU SOMETHING?
SURE. SHOOT.
I WANT TO WRITE A GOOD BOXING STORY IN MEMORY OF JOE. I WANT TO GIVE THE STORY A VERY REALISTIC FEEL. BUT I'LL NEED YOUR HELP. WILL YOU HELP ME?
OF COURSE. MY TIME IS YOURS.
THANKS. HAVE YOU EVER READ ANY BOXING STORIES IN FICTION MAGAZINES?
YEAH. ONE OR TWO. DIDN'T CARE FOR 'EM. TOO UNBELIEVABLE.
"THE HEROES ALWAYS WIN," SAID BEN. "SOMETIMES YOU CAN LOSE, AND STILL BE A WINNER. LIKE JOE."
A WEEK LATER I WENT TO SEE BEN, DETERMINED TO WRITE A STORY THAT CAPTURED BEN'S PITHY, YET PROFOUND SENTIMENTS.
GYM
HOWDY, CLAY... SO, YA WANT ME TA SHOW YA AROUND FIRST? AND THEN, WE'LL GO GET A BREW OR TWO?
UHHH... NO, BEN. NO. THAT'S NOT WHAT I HAD IN MIND.


YA WANNA TALK TO SOME OF THE FIGHTERS? I'LL INTRODUCE YA TO 'EM.
NO, BEN. I WANT TO DO SOMETHING I'VE NEVER DONE BEFORE, WHEN I'VE WRITTEN MY STORIES. I WANT TO GET AS CLOSE TO BEING A BOXER AS I CAN. I DON'T WANT TO RELY ON MY IMAGINATION, OR NEWSPAPERS OR OTHER BOXING STORIES. I WANT THIS STORY TO BE ABOUT 'A LOSER WHO'S A WINNER!'... MAYBE IT'S NOT THE KIND OF STORY THAT JOE WOULD HAVE ENJOYED READING, BUT IT'LL BE A STORY JOE'S FRIENDS AND FAMILY CAN READ AND LEARN WHAT MADE HIM TICK.
SO, YA WANNA PUT ON SOME TRUNKS AND GLOVES, AND DO SOME WORK-OUTS?
YEAH. CAN YOU ARRANGE THAT?

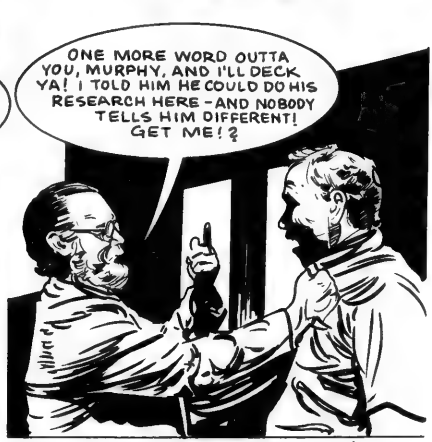
LATER, IN THE LOCKER-ROOM.
BEN SEEMS UNEASY ABOUT DOING THIS. I WONDER IF IT'S BECAUSE HE'S EMBARRASSED TO BE SEEN WITH ME OUT IN THE GYM. HE'S AFRAID I'LL BE MISTAKEN AS HIS NEW BOXING PROSPECT.
I BETTER START ACTING LIKE A BOXER. FIRST THINGS FIRST, THOUGH. I'VE GOT TO TAKE OFF MY GLASSES - HUH?
LEMME SEE YOUR HAND SIZE, SO I CAN GET YA SOME GLOVES... HMMM. THEY AIN'T BRAWLERS HANDS. THAT'S FER SURE

BEN LEFT TO GET THE GLOVES. THEN, A GUY CAME INTO THE LOCKER ROOM AND, WITHOUT HESITATION, STOOD IN FRONT OF ME AND SNEERED AS HE SAID -
HA! KEELER'S REALLY SCRAPING THE BOTTOM OF THE BARREL, NOW!
YOU CALL YOURSELF A BOXER?

NO, I DON'T. ACTUALLY I'M —
DON'T TELL ME! YOU'RE KEELER'S SON-IN-LAW! AND HE'S GOT YOU DOWN HERE TO TEACH YOU TO PROTECT YOURSELF FROM HIS DAUGHTER. SHE'S GOT A BETTER RIGHT CROSS THAN YOU... HA!

I'M A WRITER. I'M HERE TO GET SOME RESEARCH FOR A STORY.
FOR A NEWSPAPER? FOR THE POLICE GAZETTE?

NO. I'M A FICTION WRITER.
I DON'T CARE WHAT YOU ARE! YOU'RE NOT A LEGIT BOXER, AND YOU'RE NOT A MEMBER OF THE GYM, SO GET OUTTA HERE!


ONE MORE WORD OUTTA YOU, MURPHY, AND I'LL DECK YA! I TOLD HIM HE COULD DO HIS RESEARCH HERE - AND NOBODY TELLS HIM DIFFERENT! GET ME!?

HA! RESEARCH. WHAT BUNK!... RESEARCH.

WE WENT INTO THE GYM.
HA HA
SHUT UP, YA BUMS!
HA
HA
HA
HA!
HA HA
HA HA
HA

HA! WHO'S THAT PANTY-WAIST, MURPH.
HE'S SOME LAME-BRAINED WRITER, CHAMP. BEN'S GONNA TEACH HIM HOW TO PUNCH HIS TYPEWRITER.
CROUCH DOWN LOWER. BALANCE YOUR WEIGHT. YOU'VE GOTTA BE ABLE TO TAKE A PUNCH AND STILL BE IN A POSITION TO COUNTER WITH ONE OF YOUR OWN... THAT'S IT.
WHO'S THAT LOUD-MOUTHED DOPE?
HIS NAME'S MURPHY. HE'S A TRAINER AND MANAGER. WE WERE BUDDIES ONCE - A LONG TIME AGO. HE GOT JEALOUS OF ME WHEN MY BOYS DID BETTER THAN HIS... JAB WITH YOUR LEFT, BUT REMEMBER TO KEEP IT UP AS A GUARD.
WHAT'S THE KILLER INSTINCT, BEN? HOW DID JOE LOSE IT?
HIT HARDER. GET YOUR SHOULDER INTO THAT RIGHT CROSS ... IT'S A WAY OF LOOKIN' AT ALL OF LIFE, NOT JUST WHAT HAPPENS IN THE RING. YA GOTTA HAVE A WARRIOR SPIRIT, A LOVE OF BATTLE. JUST LIKE A SOLDIER. EVERY ROUND IN THE RING IS LIKE A NEW CAMPAIGN IN A WAR.
MAN, THIS FEELS GOOD!
SO, WHAT HAPPENED TO JOE?
IT'S AN OLD STORY. THEY MEET A GIRL, OR GET RELIGIOUS. ONE THING OR ANOTHER, THEY GET SOFT. THEY LOSE THE FIGHTING EDGE. THEY CAN'T GO INTO THAT RING AND LOOK AT THEIR OPPONENT DEAD STRAIGHT IN THE EYE AND SAY TA THEMSELVES, "I'M GONNA DEMOLISH HIS UGLY PUSS."
HEY, WRITER! HEY, MR. RESEARCH!

YOU WANT SOME REAL RESEARCH, PAL? HEY, BEN! WHY DON'T YA LET HIM SPAR WITH THE CHAMP FOR A ROUND OR TWO?
IS HE SERIOUS?
YEAH. EVER SINCE ONE OF HIS BOYS BECAME CITY CHAMP HE'S BEEN RUBBIN' EVERYONE'S NOSES IN IT...ESPECIALLY MINE.
DON'T LET HIM BAIT YA... WHY DON'T WE DO THIS ANOTHER DAY WHEN THAT JERK ISN'T HERE?
COME ON, MISTER RESEARCH? GO INTO THE RING AND TAKE A FEW SWIPES AT THE CHAMP... WHAT'S THE MATTER? AREN'T YA MAN ENOUGH?
I'M GONNA DO IT.
IGNORE HIM, KIDDO. HE'S A —
DON'T TRY TO STOP ME, BEN.
JUST TELL ME WHAT I SHOULD DO.
ROLL WITH THE PUNCHES. SOMETIMES YOU'LL GET CAUGHT WITH YOUR GUARD DOWN, SO JUST TAKE THE PUNCH EASILY. DON'T FIGHT IT.
IF HE TRIES TO BACK YA INTO A CORNER JUST PULL AWAY FROM HIM. GO TO THE SIDE. KEEP IN THE CENTER OF THE RING.
YA GOTTA BE TOUGH. YA GOTTA HATE HIM! THINK OF SOMEONE YA HATE. THINK OF A FACE THAT YA WANNA DEMOLISH!
THAT WON'T BE TOO HARD.
IT'S NOT EASY TA HATE, CLAY. SOMETIMES YA GOTTA USE YOUR IMAGINATION.

ONCE IN THE RING FACING THE CHAMP IT DIDN'T TAKE ME LONG TO REALIZE WHO HAD THE TRUE 'KILLER INSTINCT'—

AND WHO DIDN'T.

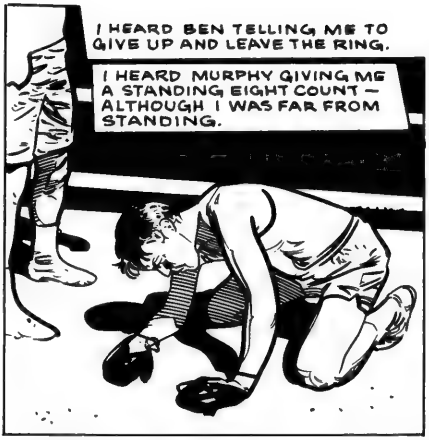
THE BLOW HURT ME. I LASHED BACK WITH A RAGING FURY, LOSING ALL THE COMPOSURE THAT I WANTED TO KEEP.

I MISSED.

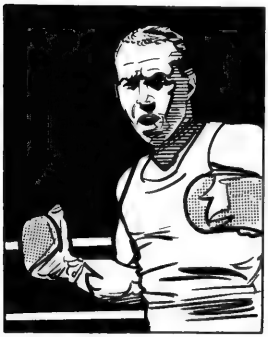
MY GUARD WAS DOWN. THE CHAMP MOVED IN AND LET ME HAVE IT. I SAW IT COMING AND I TENSED TO FIGHT THE BLOW. THAT WAS ANOTHER MISTAKE.

THEN I REMEMBERED BEN'S ADVICE TO ROLL WITH THE PUNCHES. I FOUND THAT I COULD ABSORB SOME OF THE PUNISHMENT — BUT I ALSO FOUND THAT I COULDN'T PUT ANY TRAIN OF THOUGHT TOGETHER TO TELL MY FEET TO MOVE ME OUT OF HARM'S WAY.

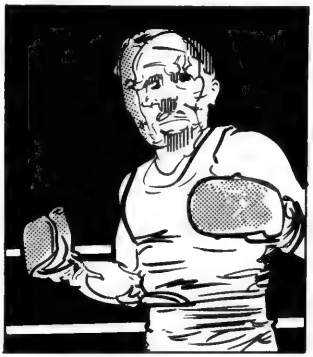
I WAS, WHAT THEY CALL, 'PUNCH DRUNK.'


I HEARD BEN TELLING ME TO GIVE UP AND LEAVE THE RING.
I HEARD MURPHY GIVING ME A STANDING EIGHT COUNT — ALTHOUGH I WAS FAR FROM STANDING.

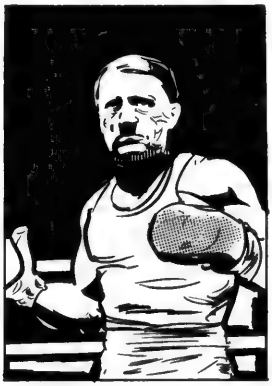
THE CHAMP HAD BATTERED ME, YET, DEEP DOWN, I DIDN'T HATE HIM. BUT, I DION'T WANT TO BREAK OFF THE FIGHT UNTIL I'D FELT THE 'KILLER INSTINCT.'

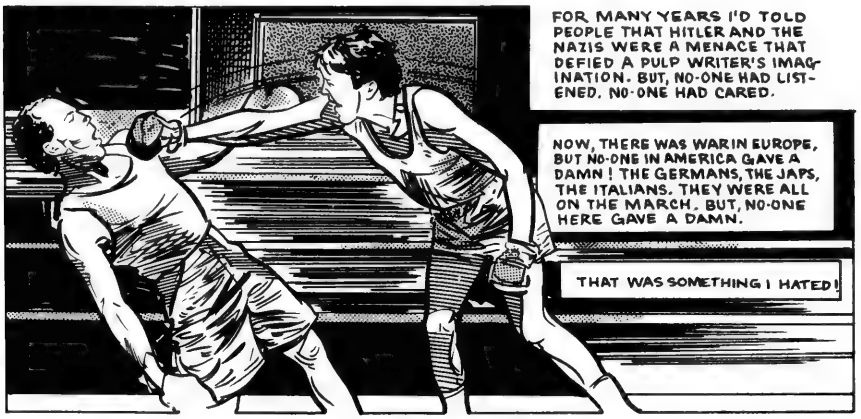


BEN HAD TOLD ME TO USE MY IMAGINATION; TO THINK OF SOMEONE'S FACE THAT I WANTED TO DEMOLISH.



HELLO, ADOLF. INVADE POLAND, WILL YA?!

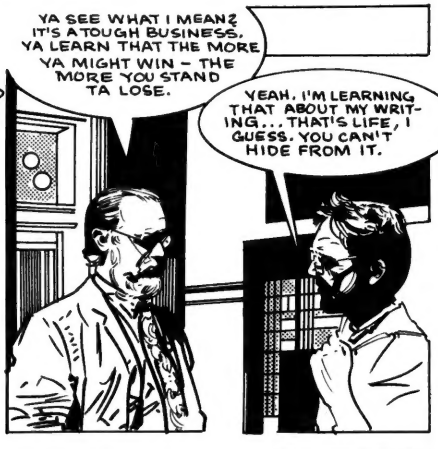



FOR MANY YEARS I'D TOLD PEOPLE THAT HITLER AND THE NAZIS WERE A MENACE THAT DEFIED A PULP WRITER'S IMAGINATION. BUT, NO-ONE HAD LISTENED. NO-ONE HAD CARED.
NOW, THERE WAS WAR IN EUROPE, BUT NO-ONE IN AMERICA GAVE A DAMN! THE GERMANS, THE JAPS, THE ITALIANS. THEY WERE ALL ON THE MARCH. BUT, NO-ONE HERE GAVE A DAMN.
THAT WAS SOMETHING I HATED!

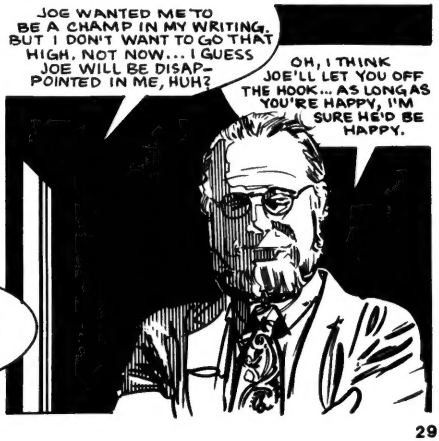
THE CHAMP STAGGERED BACK. MAYBE WITH MORE TRAINING AND MORE WEIGHT I COULD'VE KNOCKED HIM OUT.
THINK YOU'RE TOUGH, SHRIMP? I'LL CREAM YA!
HOW D'YA LIKE THEM APPLES?
UNGH!
BEN AND MURPHY JUMPED INTO THE RING TO SAVE ME.
I WAS JUST MONKEYING AROUND WITH YA, YA PIP-SQUEAK! I COULDA KNOCKED YOUR BLOCK OFF, IF I REALLY WANTED TO!
YA DUMB CREAM-PUFF!
OKAY, CHAMP, THAT'S IT FOR TODAY. HIT THE SHOWERS.
HOW'S YOUR CHOPS, CLAY? YOU REALLY GOT BELTED.
AAAAHH...
SAY SOMETHING, CLAY. HOW'S YOUR JAW?
AAAAHH...
SOMEBODY GET THE SMELLING SALTS, WILL YA?

I WAS SORE, BUT THERE WAS NO SERIOUS DAMAGE DONE. AS I SAT IN THE LOCKER-ROOM AND RECOVERED I WATCHED THE CHAMP SHOWER, GET DRESSED AND LEAVE.

LATER, WHEN I SHOWERED AND DRESSED SOME OF THE OTHER BOXERS, WHO HAD WATCHED THE FIGHT, CAME UP TO ME AND TOLD ME THAT THEY HATED THE CHAMP AND HE HAD DESERVED TO BE SHOWN-UP.


YA SEE WHAT I MEAN? IT'S A TOUGH BUSINESS, YA LEARN THAT THE MORE YA MIGHT WIN – THE MORE YOU STAND TA LOSE.
YEAH. I'M LEARNING THAT ABOUT MY WRITING... THAT'S LIFE, I GUESS. YOU CAN'T HIDE FROM IT.

I'LL NEVER FORGET THE LOOK IN THE CHAMP'S EYES AFTER I HIT HIM. A REAL LOOK OF HATE. HOW CAN HE LIVE LIKE THAT– DAY IN AND DAY OUT?
WELL, NOW I KNOW WHY JOE COULDN'T LIVE LIKE THAT. NOW, I UNDERSTAND JOE MORE THAN I EVER DID. IT WAS WORTH ALL THE BRUISES.


JOE WANTED ME TO BE A CHAMP IN MY WRITING, BUT I DON'T WANT TO GO THAT HIGH. NOT NOW... I GUESS JOE WILL BE DISAPPOINTED IN ME, HUH?
OH, I THINK JOE'LL LET YOU OFF THE HOOK... AS LONG AS YOU'RE HAPPY, I'M SURE HE'D BE HAPPY.

HI, NANCY. I'M BACK.
HI. I'M IN THE BEDROOM, FEEDING THE BABY.
CLAY? WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
OH, JUST GETTING A DRINK. I'M THIRSTY.
I ALSO NEED IT AS A PAIN-KILLER.
WHAT'S THE MATTER? YOUR VOICE SOUNDS STRANGE.
OH, MAN. EVERYTHING'S STARTING TO SWELL. MY JAW IS SORE... HOW DID JOE TAKE THIS ALL THOSE YEARS?
NO WONDER JOE ENDED UP LOOKING LIKE A WRECK. BUSTED NOSE. CAULIFLOWER EARS. MISSING TEETH... HAZARDS OF THE TRADE, I GUESS. GOD, WHAT A LOUSY TRADE TO BE IN!
NEVILLE CALLED. HE WANTED ME TO TELL YOU THAT HE CHECKED INTO THOSE PRODUCERS WHO OFFERED YOU THE JOB. HE SAID THAT THEY DON'T HAVE A GOOD REPUTATION, SO HE'S GLAD YOU TURNED THEM DOWN... BUT, HE WANTS YOU TO CALL HIM ABOUT THE NOVEL.
OKAY.
WHY DON'T YOU COME INTO THE BEDROOM, SO I DON'T HAVE TO RAISE MY VOICE?

CLAY? WHY DIDN'T YOU COME INTO THE BEDROOM? IT'S NOT EASY TO FEED THE BABY AND TALK AT THE SAME TIME.
UHHH, NANCY, SOMETHING HAPPENED WHEN I WAS AT THE GYM.
HOLY COW!! SO, I SEE!
IT'S NOT AS BAD AS IT LOOKS.
OH, YEAH? HAVE YOU LOOKED IN A MIRROR LATELY?... WHAT HAPPENED? DID THEY RUN OUT OF PUNCHING BAGS AND ASK YOU TO SUBSTITUTE FOR ONE?
NO. I SORTA VOLUNTEERED.
VOLUNTEERED? DO YOU EXPECT ME TO BELIEVE THAT?
WHEN YOU MARRY A WRITER YOU HAVE TO BELIEVE ALL KINDS OF THINGS.
OH, WHAT HOOEY. HERE, SIT DOWN AND LET ME EXAMINE IT...YOU TOLD ME THAT ALL YOU WERE DOING WAS GOING TO THE GYM TO TALK TO BEN AND TAKE SOME NOTES.
IF I HAD TOLD YOU THAT I WANTED TO GO THERE TO FIGHT YOU WOULD HAVE TIED ME INTO MY CHAIR AND NEVER LET ME GO. RIGHT?... I JUST WANTED THIS STORY TO HAVE LIFE-LIKE REALISM. FOR JOE'S SAKE.

WELL, YOU GOT REALISM. THEY SHOULD USE YOU AS A MODEL FOR THE FRONT COVER.
IT'S REALLY BEEN A CRAZY TEN DAYS, HASN'T IT? GAIL IS BORN. JOE DIES. WAR BREAKS OUT. THE NOVEL IS BOUGHT. I TURN DOWN A JOB FROM NEVILLE.
AND, YOUR WIFE BEGINS TO WONDER IF SHE MARRIED A MENTAL-CASE.
OUCH! MY HAIR HURTS TOO, YOU KNOW.
COME ON. A NICE HOT BATH SHOULD FIX YOU UP.
I CAN THINK OF SOMETHING ELSE THAT'LL FIX ME UP JUST AS WELL.
OH, OH.
IT'S BEEN A LONG TIME SINCE WE DID THIS... I'M NOT SURE I REMEMBER HOW IT'S DONE.
OH, YEAH? TELL THAT TO YOUR PAL THERE. HE SEEMS TO HAVE A LONG MEMORY.
WELL, HE'S BEEN LONELY THESE LAST FEW MONTHS. HA, HA, HA.
SHHHH! YOU'LL WAKE THE BABY.

FIN